



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND  
ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, MARYLAND 21005-5001

REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

31 OCT 2001

AMSSB-DIC (385)

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Precautionary Measures for Mail Handling Personnel

1. All of us are acutely aware of the recent incidents involving biohazards found in our country's postal system and the exposure of personnel to these potentially life-threatening diseases. Regardless of our individual responsibilities, everyone needs to remain vigilant for any suspicious mail or packages, whether delivered through normal mail channels or via other means. I want to tell you that we are taking every reasonable precaution to protect the safety and health of our workforce regarding these threats.

2. The following recommendations are applicable to those mail clerks and mail couriers who routinely handle mail on Aberdeen Proving Ground:

a. Personal protective equipment (PPE). Such equipment as described below will be provided to Garrison and Garrison-supported tenants by our Respirator Custodian, Mr. Joseph Pedone (5-5497), IAW Interservice Support Agreements. Tenants with their own safety program staff are encouraged to follow the guidelines of this memorandum, but must provide their own PPE or provide funds to the Garrison for this support. In either case, personnel using PPE must be educated on the proper donning and doffing of the protection as well as its limitations and protection properties.

(1) Use of impermeable gloves (non-latex) is encouraged, but not required. Nitrile gloves are preferred due to their non-allergenic properties. This type of glove should be available in our Office Eagle stores shortly.

(2) Respirators are voluntary, but if worn, should be issued through a respirator custodian who will provide and fit test the proper respirator. The recommended respirator is the N100. These respirators are disposable and normally usable for periods not to exceed 7 days, i.e., weekly. Unless an indication of positive exposure has occurred, both the respirators and gloves may be disposed in regular trash.

b. Personal and environmental hygiene. Consuming food or beverages, to include candy, gum, and tobacco products, must not be done in the mail handling areas. Regular washing of hands and face with soap and water should be accomplished by all mail handling personnel. This is particularly important before eating/smoking and

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after handling the mail. No special precautions beyond normal housekeeping and janitorial cleaning of the mail room are being required.

c. Mail room access. Only authorized personnel (mail clerks and mail couriers) should be in mail rooms. Management procedures and guidelines should be instituted to limit personnel access to these areas and address mail handling precautions.

d. Emergency response. Suspicious mail should be handled in accordance with the guidance contained at the enclosure.

e. Medical treatment. When an indication of positive exposure to anthrax has occurred, all potentially exposed personnel will be referred to Kirk U.S. Army Health Clinic for medical treatment IAW the Centers for Disease Control guidelines.

3. Although these recommendations primarily address mail being processed through our postal system, all personnel must remain equally cautious when opening packages delivered through commercial carriers, e.g., FEDEX, UPS, EMORY, etc. While these packages are typically hand-delivered and less likely to be spilling contents, any other suspicious feature dictates that they be reported IAW the same guidance contained at the enclosure.

4. This guidance is based upon the best available information at this time and is subject to change pending a reassessment of the threats to the workforce.

5. My POC for this action is Mr. John Hayden, Installation Safety Division, 410-306-1100.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Encl



MARDI U. MARK  
Colonel, OD  
Deputy Installation Commander

DISTRIBUTION:

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## **HOW TO HANDLE ANTHRAX THREATS**

Many facilities in communities around the country have received anthrax threat letters. Most were empty envelopes while some have contained powdery substances. These guidelines are recommended procedures for handling such incidents.

### **REMAIN CALM AND FOCUSED**

1. Anthrax organisms can cause infection in the skin, gastrointestinal system, or the lungs. To do so, the organism must be rubbed into abraded skin, swallowed, or inhaled as a fine aerosol. Disease can be prevented after exposure to the anthrax spores by early treatment with the appropriate antibiotics. Anthrax is not spread from one person to another person.
2. For anthrax to be effective as a covert agent, it must be aerosolized into very small particles. This is difficult to do, and requires a great deal of technical skill and special equipment. If these small particles are inhaled, life-threatening lung infection can occur, but prompt recognition and treatment are effective.

### **SUSPICIOUS UNOPENED LETTER OR PACKAGE MARKED WITH THREATENING MESSAGE, SUCH AS "ANTHRAX"**

1. Do not shake or empty the contents of any suspicious envelope or package.
2. PLACE the envelope or package down gently where you got it from.
  - If the air handling system for the room CAN be shut down promptly, do not attempt to place it in a plastic bag or cover it. Additional handling of the item only extends your potential exposure time and risks spreading the hazard.
  - If the air handling system for the room CANNOT be shut down promptly, attempt to place the item in a plastic bag or cover it before leaving the room.
3. Properly remove your gloves and leave them in the area with the suspicious envelope or package.
4. Then LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).
5. WASH your hands and face with soap and water.
6. If wearing a respirator, WASH your face with it on, then remove it and wash your face again.
7. CALL 911 and report the situation with as much detail as possible, to include specific location and a call-back number.
8. LIST all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give this list to the emergency response personnel.

## **ENVELOPE WITH POWDER AND POWDER SPILLS OUT ONTO SURFACE**

1. DO NOT try to CLEAN UP the powder.
2. PLACE the envelope or package down gently nearby or where you got it from.
  - If the air handling system for the room CAN be shut down promptly, do not attempt to place it in a plastic bag or cover it. Additional handling of the item only extends your potential exposure time and risks spreading the hazard.
  - If the air handling system for the room CANNOT be shut down promptly, attempt to place the item in a plastic bag or cover it before leaving the room.
3. LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away). Alert anyone else in the area of the situation and have them move outside of the room and close the door.
4. Have someone CALL 911 and report the situation with as much detail as possible, to include specific location and a call-back number.
5. Have someone NOTIFY your chain of command.
6. WASH your hands and face with soap and water.
7. If wearing a respirator, WASH your face with it on, then remove it and wash your face again.
8. CALL 911 and report the situation with as much detail as possible, to include specific location and a call-back number.
9. LIST all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give this list to the emergency response personnel.

## **QUESTION OF ROOM CONTAMINATION BY AEROSOLIZATION**

For example: Small device triggered, warning that the air handling system is contaminated or warning that a biological agent was released in a public space.

1. TURN OFF fans or air handling units in the area.
2. LEAVE area immediately.
3. CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).
4. CALL 911 and report the situation with as much detail as possible, to include specific location and a call-back number.
5. LIST all people who were in the room or area when this suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give this list to the emergency response personnel.

## **HOW TO IDENTIFY SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES AND LETTERS**

Some characteristics of suspicious packages and letters include the following:

- Excessive postage
- Handwritten or poorly typed addresses
- Incorrect titles
- Title, but no name
- Misspellings of common words
- Oily stains, discolorations or odor
- No return address
- Excessive weight
- Lopsided or uneven envelope
- Protruding wires or aluminum foil
- Excessive security material such as masking tape, string, etc.
- Visual distractions
- Ticking sound
- Marked with restrictive endorsements, such as "Personal" or "Confidential"
- Shows a city or state in the postmark that does not match the return address.

